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BOSTON 200:

A SUMMARY

Kevin H. White, Mayor
Katharine D. Kane, Director

March 7, 1973

Office of the Boston Bicentennial
New City Hall, Room 602
Boston, Mass. 02201
338-1775



BOSTON 200: THE CITY

In 1776 John Adams, commenting on future commemorations of America's Independence, wrote:

I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the Great Anniversary Festival. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward, forevermore.

The celebration of the Bicentennial in 1976 offers all Americans an unprecedented opportunity to evaluate the country's past achievements, to consider the problems and opportunities presently confronting us, and to reflect upon our aspirations for the future. Not only is it a time for commemoration of our historic beginnings as a nation, but, in order to give real value and continued meaning to those principles by which the United States was founded, the Bicentennial must also be a reaffirmation of that spirit.

To this end, the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission in Washington, D. C. was established by Congress on July 4, 1966 to oversee and coordinate Bicentennial programs nationwide. Because the Bicentennial should offer the chance for every American to participate in the celebration, it was decided not to focus the commemoration only in one city, as a gigantic "World's Fair," but to give every state and each city the freedom to plan its own Bicentennial experience.

A Massachusetts Bicentennial Commission was set up to fulfill this function statewide.

In Boston, the Office of the Boston Bicentennial (OBB) was created by Mayor Kevin White in November, 1972 to coordinate the efforts of all city departments, private institutions, businesses, and individuals in Boston's celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the American Revolution.

The theme of Boston's Bicentennial is "The City." Boston 200 is the name chosen for the programs sponsored and coordinated by the OBB. The number "200" connotes not a fixed point in time, but a continuum; Boston's Bicentennial will celebrate the living presence of the city's three hundred years of tradition, while also pointing to the directions the city will take in the future. The use of "Boston" emphasizes the programs' focus on the city, a theme selected after much discussion between the OBB, Boston's residents, and community leaders. Since almost three quarters of America's population live in urban areas and cities are thus a way of life for so many Americans, it is an especially appropriate theme. Boston will build no fairgrounds for the Bicentennial: the entire city will be the celebration.

Boston has long been recognized as one of the most "livable" cities in the United States. Its special character is not a matter of myth, but is evident in the people and organizations which comprise Boston: its renowned symphony orchestra and art museums, great universities, towering skyline, interesting neighborhoods and ethnic populations, medical institutions, and talented leaders in technology, politics, industry, and finance, to name only a few. Yet the "feel" of Boston cannot be defined by the size of its buildings, by the miles of its paved roads, or by the precise number

of its cultural institutions. Nor can the quality of life in Boston be measured simply by the strength of the city's basic service networks or the economy that supports them. Boston is all of these, and more. Although it faces the problems common to an urban society, Boston remains a city that works despite them. The city has always been an evolving, growing organism constantly molded and re-formed by the needs of those people who live here.

Boston 200 will celebrate the city in all of its diversity, complexity, and beauty. Many visitors--and residents--only conceive of Boston as a collection of houses, shops, skyscrapers, and a few historic sites located on the Freedom Trail. Thus, in coordinating the Bicentennial, the OBB aims to demonstrate the infinite variety of Boston and to invite the nation and the city's residents to participate in an experience of discovery and exploration. The Bicentennial programs will make Boston's past and present visible, understandable, and enjoyable not only for those who come here from other parts of the United States, including Greater Boston, but also for the people who know Boston as home. Boston can take pride in unlocking its many doors to outsiders and, while the "birthday party" is in progress, the city may also discover how to keep them open for its residents after the visitors have gone.

Each of the Boston 200 programs is designed around a different aspect of city life. The purpose behind all of them is twofold: to direct attention to what already exists in Boston and to significantly improve and expand those resources so that the good life will become accessible to even greater numbers of people. Recognizing that any Bicentennial effort must be designed with Boston's residents and the city's

future in mind, the OBB has planned programs whose implementation will provide permanent benefits to the city.

Although the OBB will serve as the primary coordinator for these programs, they will be sponsored and developed by interested organizations, agencies, institutions, and individuals in the Boston area. Neighborhood groups have already begun to plan activities that will bring the Bicentennial directly into the lives of local residents. More than one hundred and fifty of Boston's cultural, scientific, educational, medical, civic, and commercial institutions have expressed interest in working with the OBB to design and implement Boston 200 programs. In addition, the OBB is interested in coordinating certain Boston 200 activities, such as cultural programs, with Bicentennial celebrations in other American cities, notably Philadelphia, New York, and Washington.

Boston 200 will begin officially on April 18, 1975, although certain commemorations will take place even earlier, because many of the events that led to the American Revolution occurred in Boston prior to 1776. It is hoped that the spirit of the Bicentennial, as a discovery of our city and of ourselves, will continue long after the festivities end in December, 1976.

CITYGAME: THE CITY IS THE EXHIBIT

Boston has always been a center of innovation and revolution, from the days of the Puritan colonizers to the twentieth-century development of a sophisticated elec-

tronics industry. Each of the periods of political, economic, intellectual, and social change in American history has, in some way, left its mark on the Boston landscape. Thus the Boston environment encompasses a rich variety of individuals, resources, and institutions which have grown through Boston's history to form what exists today as the fabric of the city. Accordingly, the theme chosen for the Boston 200 program Citygame is "The City Is the Exhibit," a theme that emphasizes the qualities which make urban environments--specifically Boston--unique and exciting.

Citygame will transform Boston into a dynamic collage of "events," from historic buildings to new exhibits, which will be integrated into a network of trails, paths, and tours. The city's wealth of historical, cultural, educational, scientific, and civic institutions; its diverse and fascinating ethnic neighborhoods; its historic areas; and Bostonians themselves form the setting of Citygame.

Taking the Freedom Trail as a model, Citygame will capitalize on the fact that many of Boston's special qualities can best be appreciated by walking its streets. Neighborhood walking trails will be designed to unlock and make visible the heritage of Boston's neighborhoods, such as Beacon Hill, the South End, and Charlestown. Theme trails, including the Black Heritage Trail and the Religion Trail, will be developed around special exhibits, institutions, historic buildings, and new markers. Thus the ways to play Citygame are nearly unlimited: discovering a historic marker on a store front, walking the Literary Trail, gazing at a giant map of Boston on which key sites are lit up, or learning of Boston's contributions to medicine on the Medical Trail.

Citygame has four major objectives. First, it will encourage Boston's neighborhoods and institutions to re-evaluate and make visible their heritage. Second, it will make residents and visitors more aware of the city that surrounds them; by highlighting in exciting and innovative ways the interconnections and processes which form an urban society, Citygame will demonstrate the interdependence of men in relationships which are not always recognized. Third, by encouraging new communication between individuals and institutions, Citygame will create a climate in which programs to improve urban life might be designed. Fourth, Citygame will develop permanent exhibits that will enrich city life for Boston's residents after the Bicentennial period.

FESTIVAL AMERICAN: THE CITY IS CULTURAL CENTER

Cities have often been the setting in which culture is born and in which it continues to grow and thrive. Boston is an outstanding example of an American city whose culture has always been fascinating and varied and in which the arts--whose vital function is to enrich and regenerate the quality of life--have prospered and grown. Therefore, Boston 200 will focus on "The City Is Cultural Center" in its program Festival American, which will be produced in conjunction with the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs and the Metropolitan Cultural Alliance of Boston.

Festival American will commemorate the finest aspects of Boston's cultural heritage, both past and present, and will revive certain old celebrations as well as

create some new ones. For the purpose of organization, Festival American has been divided into three general areas. Commemorative Celebrations will honor those people, places, events, and ideas from Boston's past which were significant in shaping the history of the United States from 1630 to the present. Of particular interest will be the commemoration of "Boston Firsts." Cultural Celebrations will be programs of outstanding quality in the areas of music, dance, theater, and film. Important American artists--composers, choreographers, and playwrights--will be commissioned for new works in honor of the Bicentennial, while all of Boston's performing arts institutions will present special programs, expand their regular seasons, and work together in new ways, possibly with groups from other American cities. Community Celebrations will include festivals and events, from those shaped around the ethnic heritage of Boston's residents to those which center on traditional holidays, in which all members of a community may easily participate. Summerthing, Boston's nationally-known neighborhood festival, will form the core of these programs.

There are four objectives underlying Festival American. First, it will maintain and strengthen the cultural institutions of Boston. Second, Festival American will recall important moments of Boston's and the nation's past. Third, it will enrich people's lives by making the arts accessible to many more residents and visitors. Finally, Festival American will celebrate the cultural heritage of Boston and the significant contributions of all American artists of the past and present, while fostering the growth of the young artists of the future.

PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS: THE CITY IS LIVABLE ENVIRONMENT

Boston is at once a city, a region, and a state of mind. However, its intangible spirit rises from and is, indeed, sustained by its very practical role as a place in which people work, play, and raise their children. Thus "The City Is Livable Environment" will serve as the theme of another Boston 200 program, Physical and Environmental Improvements, being developed in conjunction with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, Boston's planning agency.

There are five areas into which the Physical and Environmental Improvements program has been divided. Historic Preservation will not only secure public and private funds for the restoration of historic environments and deteriorated structures which are of historic significance, but it will also arouse public recognition and enjoyment of Boston's rich architectural heritage. The Open Space program will improve the quality of Boston's open spaces--including those in the neighborhoods, the downtown core, and the Olmsted Park System--by restoring lawns and pathways, adding benches and better lighting, so that their beauty and recreational possibilities will be enhanced. The goal of Environmental Improvements is to make the entire city safe and enjoyable: street lights, street signs, sidewalks, and pavements will be improved, while the number of benches, water fountains, toilet facilities, and trees will also be increased. Aiming to keep private vehicles out of the downtown core, a Transportation program is being planned that encourages the use of the existing

rapid transit (MBTA) system and a pedestrian approach to the city; it also includes development of special Bicentennial mass carriers, such as mini-buses or water-taxis. Finally, for Bicentennial planning and coordination purposes, a Space Bank inventory of locations for exhibits, events, and performances will be compiled and constantly updated.

There are three major objectives underlying the plans of Physical and Environmental Improvements. First, the program seeks to capitalize on the natural beauty and assets of Boston, either through restoration or addition of facilities. Second, it plans to minimize the potential for inconvenience caused by congestion or delays for both residents and visitors, so that Boston 200 becomes a pleasurable, memorable experience for everyone. Third, it aims to maximize the number of long-term improvements in the urban environment so that Boston will remain a "livable" city in the years ahead.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: THE CITY IS DESTINATION

The social or cultural vitality of any city is always calibrated to the strength of its economy. Following a period of stagnation which ended in the mid-1950's, Boston's economy has grown steadily as a result of the nationwide services revolution and energetic, local urban renewal. Despite this expansion, however, it has not been the City but rather the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with its power to implement new forms of taxation, which has been the primary recipient of increases

in tax benefits accruing from this growth. Boston continues to depend on its property tax for income.

In this context, the Bicentennial is related to the city's continued economic development in several critical ways. Direct benefits are closely related to the expansion of tourism, to the substantial increase in demands for certain goods and services that will, in turn, create new jobs and revenues. There will also be opportunities for investment and new business enterprises, as well as for joint action by merchants groups interested in the future of specific commercial areas. These economic benefits due to Boston 200 will all be considered as possible new revenue sources for the city of Boston.

The importance of the Bicentennial's catalytic role in the expansion of tourism cannot be overemphasized. "The City Is Destination" will thus be the focus of Boston 200's Tourism Development programs, which are being developed in conjunction with the Department of Commerce and Manpower and the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Despite widespread recognition that tourism is a major growth industry and one especially suited to Boston's mature economy, there has been little concentrated effort to develop tourism in Boston. A focused, professional strategy is necessary to expand Boston's share of the tourism market. Present figures estimate the number of additional visitors to Boston during 1975-1976 will range from 12 to 18 million. It is clear that if a strong, directed promotional campaign were undertaken, the number of Boston 200 visitors could be increased well beyond these estimates.

The Tourism Development program will try to refine economic projections

through further research, and locate target audiences and develop marketing strategies to reach them. Through extensive promotion, it aims to motivate visitors to come to Boston throughout the Bicentennial, encouraging a regular, predictable level of demand to offset current seasonal patterns. The Tourism Development programs will also encourage night-time and weekend visits to the city to stimulate economic activity in these now-slower times. Working closely with Boston's business interests, the program will lay the groundwork for maintaining higher visitor volume and tourism-related activity after the 1975-1976 celebration period.

Because Boston is not saddled with a noisy boosterism, it is free to build a tourist program which maximizes economic benefits while supporting widely-held environmental values and upgrading the architectural heritage which gives Boston its unique character. Boston 200 can encourage tourism-related investments of value for both residents and visitors, as well as those activities, literature, and attractions that enhance the quality of life in the city.

VISITOR SERVICES: THE CITY IS HOST

The result of an effective "The City Is Destination" program will be that Boston must also prepare for a Bicentennial role as "The City Is Host"; accordingly, this theme will provide the focus for Boston 200's Visitor Services programs.

Boston's present visitor service network is underdeveloped and scattered throughout

the city. To fill this gap, plans are underway for the creation of a comprehensive, decentralized Information System. Although a major concern of any information system is its efficient response to the vast number of specific questions which the visitor will ask, another equally important function has been considered in planning the information system: namely, a teaching and regulating function that will enable the information system to influence the dispersion of visitors over time and space. Thus every effort will be made to inform and orient visitors before they reach Boston by disseminating information through the media (newspapers, radio, TV, magazines) and through special information pieces that will be developed for advance distribution (general brochures, Festival American Calendar, hotel listings, motorist and MBTA information). A special effort will be made to teach visitors to view and enjoy Boston as a "walking city." All existing, workable information outlets will be used and new ones developed; these include enlarging the New City Hall information booth, starting a Resident-Host program so that all interested Bostonians may become volunteer guides, and distributing information at hotels, newsstands, gas stations, and toll booths. Information will be designed to satisfy the complete range of visitor concerns, from dates and locations of events, to an official Guidebook of the city, to rest area availability.

Also included in the plans for visitor services is an Accomodations system that will not only develop a coordinated reservation system for hotels and motels, but will also increase lodging capacity by using guest houses, dormitories, expanded camping facilities, and boat mooring areas. The requirements for visitor-related Support

services--check cashing, lost and found, babysitting, medical, emergency auto repair, and the like--will be defined and implemented. Finally, the special needs of Foreign Visitors will be met by developing multilingual maps and pamphlets, as well as by setting up foreign visitor information centers and recruiting a corps of guides, hosts and translators.

It is imperative for the OBB to implement a smoothly-functioning visitor service system. A major objective will be to make the visitor's experience of Boston pleasant and meaningful. Equally important is that it will provide the mechanism by which visitors' trip patterns may be guided in ways most compatible with all other city life, in order to minimize any disruption for Bostonians using the same environment. Finally, if an efficient visitor service network is developed for the Bicentennial, it will be a tool that provides permanent benefits to Boston's residents after 1975-1976.

IMPACT: THE CITY

There is another side to Boston's role as "The City Is Host," one that underlies the OBB's plans for all Bicentennial programs. Problems associated with large visitor volumes are an issue which, if overlooked, might turn the Bicentennial into a nightmare for Boston. Therefore, Impact programs are essential and will be researched, designed, and costed. In considering visitor impact on Boston, the OBB has outlined seven areas which must be included in a comprehensive impact program: information

services, transportation, environment, institutional self-defense, support services, and emergency services.

Of course impact is a concern that pervades all planning for Boston 200. It is also a major reason why the Office of the Boston Bicentennial exists. (An organization chart for the OBB follows this summary.) Even if Boston does little to advertise itself for the American Bicentennial or develops no programs for this celebration, the combined effect of private promotion efforts and the media's focus on the nation's history will generate a significant visitor volume.

Thus it is the intent of the OBB to transform any negative potential inherent in such a vast influx of people into an asset for the city. Thorough, well-regulated planning is necessary for this to take place. If the programs outlined here are developed and coordinated, Boston will acquire benefits and services that will remain to enhance its quality of life long after the city has ceased playing host to Bicentennial visitors. Moreover, the Bicentennial will serve to demonstrate for both residents and visitors the special qualities Boston enjoys in being an exciting, thriving American city.

FUNDING

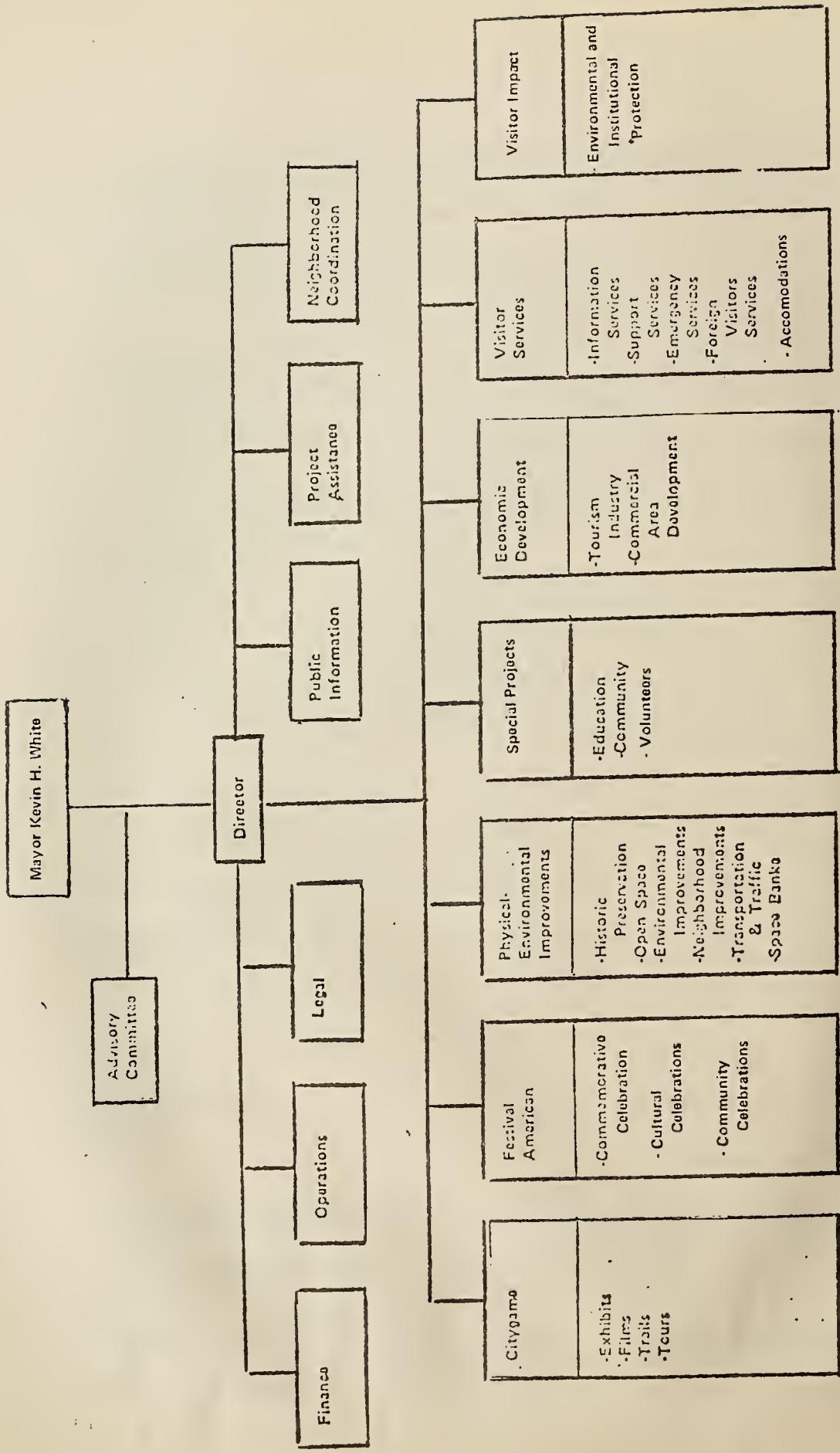
In order to develop and implement the Boston 200 programs, the OBB will be asking for grants from various Federal Departments, such as the National Endowment for the Arts and the Humanities, the Department of Commerce, the Department of

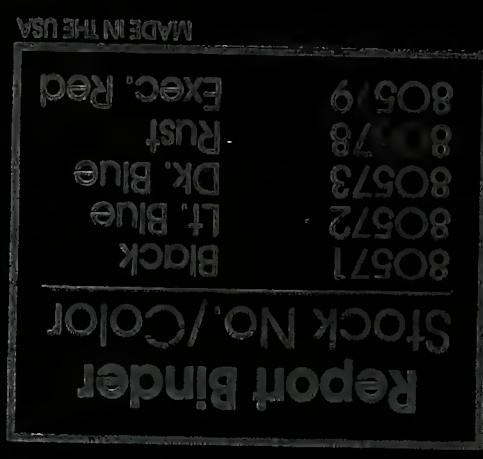
Transportation, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Funds are also being sought from private foundations, businesses, and individuals. Mayor Kevin White has submitted in his annual budget for fiscal 1974 an appropriation of \$260,000 for the operation of the Bicentennial coordinating office.

To help fund the operational costs of Boston 200, a program is being developed to license the use of the name "Boston 200" and its logo on a selected number of products and services which are of the highest quality and which relate to the Bicentennial. The product or service will be included in Boston 200 informational materials in addition to carrying Boston 200's trade name and logo. In return for these privileges, the licensee will pay a royalty or other fee to Boston 200. Items that might be licensed include a guidebook, maps, table mats, medallions, calendars, photographs, and the like.

In addition, the OBB is developing a catalogue of items that individuals and institutions can give to Boston as a birthday present in honor of the Bicentennial. The pages of the "Birthday Book" will graphically suggest a wide range of possible presents. Some examples of items that could be given to Boston include: an information booth, a guide, a uniform, a tree, a street sign, a street light, an exhibit, a painted fence, a telephone, a marker, a radio announcement, a bulletin board, a concert, a toilet, a bicycle rack, or a fountain.

The success of Boston 200 really depends on the number of people involved. If the efforts and funds of the entire community of Boston are offered to help the city celebrate itself during the Bicentennial, a genuine spirit of hospitality will result and the city as a place of enjoyment and learning will no longer be a concept, but a reality.





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